

AROUND THE CORPS IN BRIEF

11th MEU conducts urban training in Phoenix

PHOENIX — Approximately 350 Marines from the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit conducted urban training during a two-week exercise dubbed “Training in an Urban Environment” at various locations here, from March 1-14.

The exercise is part of a six-month training cycle for the 11th MEU to become special operations capable (SOC) qualified, in preparation for an upcoming deployment to the Western Pacific and Southwest Asia regions early this summer.

During this deployment, 11th MEU will act as America’s quick reaction force to safeguard U.S. citizens and support our country’s interests abroad.

Since three-quarters of the world’s population live in urban environments, it is essential that Marines conduct intense training in a wide variety of urban settings.

The Phoenix area provided the 11th MEU with a realistic, unfamiliar, urban setting not available aboard Marine installations.

This TRUE training focused on preparing its Maritime Special Purpose Force and reconnaissance assets for potential direct action missions that the MEU might be called to do during its six-month deployment.

The MSPF is a team comprised of 2nd Platoon, 1st Force Reconnaissance; Security Platoon, Headquarters and Service Company, Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, who acts as the force’s security element; and various other attachments such as human intelligence, combat camera, communications and explosive ordnance disposal Marines.

I Marine Expeditionary Force’s Special Operations Training Group hosted the training.

During the exercise, Marine helicopter pilots also had an opportunity to practice urban flying and navigation techniques using altitudes approved by the Federal Aviation Administration.

LAR scouts conduct route recon at Fort A.P. Hill

FORT A.P. HILL, Va. — Marines from Light Armored Reconnaissance Platoon, Weapons Company with the 24th Marine Expeditionary Units’ Ground Combat Element worked to strengthen their basic skills by conducting route reconnaissance training here March 16.


The exercise allowed the scouts and Light Armored Vehicle crewman to practice the proper techniques involved in the route reconnaissance process.

“Basically what we were doing out there was making sure the roads would be able to support the vehicles from the [Battalion Landing Team] and [MEU Service Support Group],” said Sgt. Thomas Busch, chief scout for LAR Platoon.

The LAR Marines conducted the reconnaissance work by using several different means.

First the Marines would take their vehicles to certain areas along the

### Hawaiian PT . . .



Lance Cpl. Rich Mattingly

**MCB HAWAII, KANEOHE BAY -- Private Ruben Gutierrez (center right) a rifleman with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, pulls another Marine during abbreviated swim pre-qualification trials for upcoming coxswain and maritime navigator courses at the base swimming pool aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, March 8.**

route. They would stop, dismount their vehicles, and with Marines providing proper security with M-16 rifles and M-249 Squad Automatic Weapons, would measure the roadway using a piece of cord with knots in it that represented various distances.

Once they had the width of the road measured the Marines also tested the slope of the road.

“To measure slope, you take your [horizontal distance] which is my height times [vertical distance] which is how many steps [another Marines] takes and [multiply] it by 100,” said Busch. “That will give you a percent of the slope. If the slope is under 30 percent, the vehicles can climb it with ease.”

Once the scouts had the proper road width and slope of the road, they also took time to conduct some surveillance of the area.

Marines test comm gear during Afghanistan ops

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — Communications Platoon, Headquarters Company, 6th Marine Regiment, held a two-day communications exercise at Camp Bulldog here March 15 and 16.

The exercise was intended to test the platoon’s communication capabilities in Afghanistan, according to 1st Lt. Greg A. Lizak, assistant communications officer.

He said the exercise successfully tested certain communications equipment and identified problems with others.

Sergeant Javier Perez, assistant wire chief, said the Marines configured communications equipment to meet the requirements of potential future operations.

The Marines set up and tested communications equipment including satellite and line-of-sight systems, along with other communication equipment. The equipment gives

them capabilities to transmit both voice and data either by satellite or line-of-sight transmissions.

The communication equipment tested during the exercise is also used to communicate with the various Provincial Reconstruction Teams operating to accelerate the well being of Afghan people throughout Afghanistan. To ensure the regiment’s ability to communicate throughout the entire area of operations the platoon contacted all units within the area, some hundreds of miles away.

‘Angels’ to return home after Exercise Balikatan

MCAS IWAKUNI, Japan — Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 362 returned back to Iwakuni from Clark Air Base, Republic of Philippines, March 13 to wrap up the Hawaiian squadron’s last exercise of its unit deployment program.

The Ugly Angels concluded their training for Exercise Balikatan 2004, the annual bilateral training exercise between American and Philippine armed forces, after one month. The squadron arrived in the Philippines Feb. 19.

The more than 120 Marines and sailors from the squadron who participated in the exercise included pilots flying CH-53D helicopters, and support personnel getting the aircraft in the sky.

“This is one of the most successful UDP that I have ever been a part of,” said Lt. Col. Raymond F. L’Heureux, HMMH-362 commanding officer.

Part of what makes the squadron victorious in every mission they execute is their work ethic, according to L’Heureux.

During their month-long deployment to the Philippines, the squadron worked seven days a week. The days were divided into two shifts — day and night.

It was not all work for the Ugly

Angels. On March 1 the hardworking squadron took a day off to celebrate their successes in their deployments. Part of the celebration was a squadron run followed by a social event, which included drinks, food and a live, local band.

The Ugly Angels are slated to return back to Hawaii in April.

Lancers host kids, build future friendships

MCAS IWAKUNI, Japan — Children from the Kawashimo Yochien kindergarten school had an interesting show and tell session March 12.

Instead of the normal collection of special rocks and rare comic books, the children all shared in the treasures Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 212 had to offer.

The kids, ages 3 to 6 years old, spent the day touring the Lancer’s hanger and surrounding flight line, which houses their chariot: the F/A-18.

“Some of the Marines in ‘212 have children that go to the school, including myself,” said Lt. Col. James B. Bright, VMFA-212 commanding officer. “The teachers wanted to know if I would be interested in hosting my daughter’s class on a field trip, but then we decided to have the whole school come.”

About 80 kids came here to get the chance to sit inside the cockpit, watch their teacher don survival gear worn by pilots and giggle for the camera in numerous photo opportunities.

Once the static displays and photos were over, the Lancers and their new pals made their way over for a picnic lunch, and playtime.

“The whole experience was wonderful,” said Yoshiko Yoshida, Kawashimo Yochien teacher. “The children loved the airplanes and it

was exciting for all of us to see what some of the children’s parents do for work.”

Marines complete leadership course in Djibouti

CAMP LEMONIER, Djibouti — Cpl. John D. Humble was recognized as the class honor graduate during a commencement ceremony March 17 marking the completion of Corporal’s Leadership Course 1-04, the first class conducted here by personnel fighting the Global War on Terrorism.

The class was sponsored by U.S. Marine Forces Central Command-Djibouti and was open to Marine corporals and lance corporals with at least eight months at their current rank assigned to Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa and MARCENT – Djibouti.

Humble said the course, which consisted of 17 training days, was challenging, but mostly it reinforced knowledge he gained previously.

“I learned more attention to detail,” he said. “There was more emphasis on counseling, which is important because Marines always need to know how well they are doing, and often when they do a good job it gets overlooked.”

Gunnery Sgt. Stephanie A. Servis, the course’s staff noncommissioned officer in charge, said the course was taught in accordance with the Marine Corps University’s course curriculum. The students learned basic military studies, leadership and battle studies.

The first course was only open to Marines, but Servis plans on offering the next class to all the services aboard Camp Lemonier. Corporal’s Leadership Course 2-04 is scheduled to begin in early May.

I MHG completes longest convoy in unit’s history

FORWARD OPERATING BASE ST. MERE, Iraq — The I Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters Group completed the longest convoy in the unit’s history March 11, traveling more than 800 kilometers from staging areas in Kuwait to the forward operating base here.

The Marines and sailors began the journey from Camp Victory, Kuwait March 8 and after some challenges arrived in the U.S. Army’s 82nd Airborne Division’s area of operations three days later.

“Overall the convoy went very well,” said 1st Lt. Jacob Berry, the convoy commander and I Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters Group motor transportation officer. “The unplanned was planned for.”

The Marines of I MHG motor-T have been planning for this convoy since the end of their last deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, working extended hours for three months, said Berry.

The long hours and preparation significantly reduced the amount of breakdowns on the move north.

Compiled by the MCRD Parris Island Public Affairs Office.

## Lowcountry Blues Festival Air Show

April 24 and 25



## Featuring the: U.S. Navy Blue Angels

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